

# *Guideline Series*

## *Guidelines for the Spouses of Commanding Officers and Executive Officers*



## *The History of Naval Services FamilyLine*

Naval Services FamilyLine is a volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for every Navy family. Formerly known as the Navy Wifeline Association, the new name was adopted in September 1999 to reflect the changing face of today's Navy and to emphasize our commitment to the entire Navy community.

FamilyLine was established in 1965 by a group of Navy wives who wanted to establish a channel of communication for all Navy spouses. The aim was to provide a welcome and introduction to Navy life and to increase the spouses' understanding of the Navy's mission.

This dedicated group established an office at the Washington Navy Yard and published a quarterly newspaper, providing information and assistance to wives who were moving overseas. These Navy wives had the foresight to see the need for spouse and family support and provided the ground work for what has developed into a worldwide family support network.

With the support of the Chief of Naval Operations and Navy leadership, along with the financial support of the Navy League, Spouses Clubs worldwide, and other Navy organizations, Naval Services FamilyLine has continued to grow and flourish.

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt established the Ombudsman Program in 1970. The Chairman of FamilyLine was appointed Navy-wide Family Ombudsman-at-Large for the Chief of Naval Operations.

In 1988, the first Ombudsman Journal was published and the Navy-wide Ombudsmen Support Network was established.

For more than thirty-five years, FamilyLine volunteers have maintained a worldwide support network for Navy service members and their families. Today, the spouses of service members work together to continue this fine tradition.

**Your individual tax-deductible donations make this publication possible.**

*Revised - July 2006*

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# INTRODUCTION

Greetings to the spouse of the prospective Commanding Officer (CO) or Executive Officer (XO). This book of guidelines, written by former and current CO's and XO's spouses, is full of helpful hints and ideas. It is hoped it will ease any concerns you may have about being the Commanding Officer's spouse or Executive Officer's spouse.

Below are some things to consider as you prepare for this next tour.

- In today's Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, there is no longer a "traditional" or "typical" Commanding Officer or Executive Officer spouse. Many of the CO/XO billets are filled by women as well as men, and some COs and XOs are geographic bachelors or are unmarried. In addition, many Commanding and/or Executive Officer's spouses have full-time careers or are active duty officers themselves.
- Try not to be apprehensive about what you may imagine to be "Navy/Marine Corps/Coast Guard Tradition." This "tradition" merely acknowledges that your position is important and worthwhile and is not meant to intimidate. It is natural to feel delighted, enthusiastic, anxious, and apprehensive all at the same time about the part you will play in your spouse's career.
- Just be yourself - you have the freedom to design your own role. In fact, it is a good idea before your spouse gets to his or her Command or Executive Officer tour that you discuss together what your role will be. Set your goals and priorities, and then follow them.
- The CO/XO spouse role is essentially a leadership role. Because leadership styles vary, each person will approach the CO/XO spouse position differently. The person before you has done things differently than you, and the person who follows you will change some of the things you have done.
- Attend the Command Spouse Leadership course. Located in Newport, Rhode Island, you will be invited while the prospective CO attends Command Leadership School. Your invite will be embedded in the CO's orders.

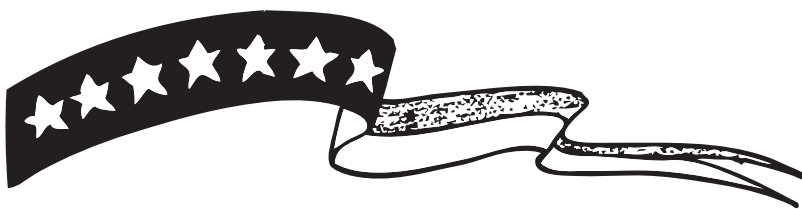
The CO/XO tour can enrich your relationship, benefit your family and create wonderful memories and friendships for you, the wardroom and the command. This is an excellent opportunity to enjoy a truly unique adventure.

## THE COMMAND SUPPORT TEAM

While each command is distinct in its makeup, in general, the Command Support Team consists of the CO's spouse, the XO's spouse, the Ombudsman or Key Volunteer, and the Command Master Chief's (CMC) or Chief of the Boat's (COB) spouse. These willing volunteers, taking the lead from the Commanding Officer, can fill important leadership roles in the command by helping to maintain the well-being and morale of the command families. As always, sensitivity, confidentiality, and open lines of communication are crucial in establishing and sustaining good relationships among the leaders of the support team.

The enthusiasm and positive spirit of the Command Support Team benefits the younger spouses and single personnel as well as enriches the cohesiveness of the command families. The presence of friendly and interested support leaders is important, particularly if the command deploys. These team members will want to share their experiences with others, be helpful and accommodating to the families, and to single personnel, especially those who have been recently welcomed aboard into the military life. If a personal crisis should occur, it will mean a great deal to know that someone is willing, able and available to help when needed.

THE COMMAND SUPPORT TEAM



# THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S SPOUSE

## WHAT WILL YOUR CONTRIBUTION BE?

There is no single, best way to describe the position of the CO's spouse. Because you design your own level of leadership commitment during your spouse's command, there is no specific job description or requirements.

There are many areas of the command and community in which you may choose to be active. Some spouses jump in and are involved in every aspect of their spouse's command, some are only active with a few things, and some are not involved at all. Again, your level of involvement depends upon what you and your spouse have decided your goals and priorities will be. What are some of the things you may be active in?

- Leading the Wardroom Spouses' Club and/or command families
- Planning wardroom and/or command social activities
- Joining the local Officers Spouses' Club
- Supporting the Command Family Association, or helping to form one
- Volunteering in the naval and/or civilian community

One thing is certain, in your new leadership position you are suddenly more visible. What you do and what you say is now of interest to the people in the wardroom, the command and the local community. You may at one time or another be viewed as one, some, or all of the following: informative, wise, creative, responsible, organized, a gourmet cook, a terrific housekeeper, an ideal parent, a perfect companion, available at the drop of the hat, a protocol expert, the chairman of any committee, a take-charge in a crisis situation person, an expert fund-raiser, a terrific writer, a career person, a fashion plate, a walking encyclopedia, a problem-solver – and the list goes on.

## HELPFUL HINTS

To help you succeed in whatever you choose to do in the military, below is a suggested list of guidelines. While they are excellent tips for a happy life in general, they have now taken on new importance.

- **Take care of yourself and your family.** It is wonderful to get involved in your spouse's command and all the community activities available, but remember to take time out for you and your family. Don't feel guilty about it and don't feel as though you have to apologize-people will understand. They have families too.
- **Be yourself.** Don't pretend or put on an act-people can spot insincerity a mile away.
- **Be friendly and approachable.** While it can sometimes be "lonely at the top," you may be able to minimize any isolation by being gracious, friendly, and approachable. No one appreciates a CO's spouse who "wears the rank."
- **Do not gossip.** Remember the old adage "loose lips sink ships." If you hear of people gossiping, try to discourage it. Also, think before making casual remarks, especially around new or junior spouses, as these "light remarks" may be taken very literally or more seriously than intended. Please be aware silence may communicate agreement.
- **Be positive.** Whether you are discussing people, the command, the area you live in, or military life in general, speak positively or just say nothing. Remember, people are listening to your every word. Also, negativism only creates unhappiness and bad feelings. If you have negative thoughts, keep them between you and your spouse.

## PRACTICAL TIPS

- Try to support the various military appreciation days such as Military Spouse Appreciation Day, Ombudsman Appreciation Day, and the Month of the Military Child. Your support and/or participation sends out a positive message.
- Keep handy the phone numbers of help and support organizations to which you are likely to refer. (There is an excellent listing in the back of this book.) Also essential is an up-to-date roster of names and phone numbers of the command and other associated naval commands.

## TURNOVER

### • You are New to the Command

Approximately a month or two before you get to your new duty station, it would be courteous to write the current CO's spouse and introduce yourself, tell him/her about yourself, your family, where you plan to live, and when you will be arriving. That way, he/she will be able to help you get settled and plan for your arrival.

### • You are Leaving the Command

When you hear from the prospective CO's spouse, it would be courteous to call or write and ask if there is anything you can do to help him/her get settled. Or, feel free to write him/her first; it will make a positive impression. After he/she arrives, you might want to invite him/her to lunch. He/she will be interested to hear all about the area, the command, activities, etc.

## WORKING WITH THE XO'S SPOUSE

Once you have decided what you wish to do within the command, it is usual to discuss your ideas with the Executive Officer's spouse (if there is one and if he/she is able to assist). The XO's spouse will probably be waiting for signals from you and will, in most cases, be ready and willing to help you out with things such as:

- Email/Phone tree
- Newsletter (if you have one)
- Social activities
- Attending military and civilian community meetings, etc.
- Discuss the specific responsibilities you wish to keep and those he/she might wish to share with you.
- If you are friends, or become friends, that is excellent. However, whether you are friends or not, regular communication between yourself and the XO's spouse can be of great benefit.
- It's good to have somebody to rely on to receive or exchange communications from the command.
- It's nice to have a confidante when your spouse is away.

Sometimes, the other spouses will talk to the XO's spouse before they'll talk to you. He/she will be able to pass on to you any concerns he/she may hear.

**SUGGESTION:** If the XO's spouse is new to the area or new to the military, try to include him/her in some of your military and/or civilian community social activities and official functions. He/she will meet new people and can learn from you and others.

## UNIQUE SITUATIONS

As with everything in life, there can be variations on the norm. Below are some situations you may run into with some ideas on how to proceed.

### • You Have Chosen NOT to Actively Participate

Whatever your personal circumstances (you may have a full-time career, a unique family situation, etc.), you have decided not to get involved. However, every group needs a leader. If you are not going to be active, then it is appropriate for you and your spouse to ask someone who is willing to accept the leadership position. Generally, the XO's spouse takes on the responsibilities. If he/she is unwilling or unable, then the spouse of the next senior officer steps in, and so on.

### • You Have Not Co-Located with Your Spouse

Spouses, for personal reasons (job, schools, etc.) have decided not to move with their service member spouses when they take command. As stated previously, every group needs a leader. Should this be your case, then it is usual for the XO's spouse (or the next senior officer's spouse) to be asked to step in and take over the leadership duties you would normally assume.

**SUGGESTION:** Although you are not in the area, you may still want to be kept informed of the command's activities. Appoint a contact person, usually the XO's spouse, whom you can call when the command is deployed and who will keep you up-to-date on command and wardroom activities.

### • The XO's Spouse Has Chosen NOT to Actively Participate

If the Executive Officer's spouse is unable to offer practical support or does not want to participate, then it is okay to ask the spouse of the next senior officer to assist you.

**SUGGESTION:** Don't reject the XO's spouse for his/her personal decision. It's still important (and common courtesy) to pass on social and official information – try to keep him/her as informed as possible, if he/she so wishes.

### • The Executive Officer is Single or is a Geographic Bachelor

If the XO is single or the XO's spouse did not co-locate, then it is all right to ask the next senior officer's spouse for support assistance.

**SUGGESTION:** If the XO's spouse did not co-locate, it would be polite to write a letter every so often to keep him/her informed of command activities and to pass on any official information.

Just as the Executive Officer's principal duties are to support the Commanding



## THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S SPOUSE

Officer and to implement his/her policies, the XO's spouse's position is also a supporting role. Your level of involvement in the command, however, will be determined not only by what you and your spouse have discussed but also by how active the CO's spouse has chosen to be. If he/she is very active, you will probably have fewer responsibilities within the wardroom and the command. In the same turn, if he/she has decided to less actively participate, then there may be more for you to do. Also, while your role is a supporting one in the command, feel free to join in and lead activities in the military and local community.

### HELPFUL HINTS

The XO's spouse's position is just as visible as the CO's spouse. Take a minute to read the "Helpful Hints" listed in The Commanding Officer's Spouse section. The same things – take care of yourself and your family, be yourself, be friendly and approachable, do not gossip, and be positive – also apply directly to you, too.

### TURNOVER

#### • You Are New to the Command

Approximately a month or two before you get to your new duty station, it would be courteous to write the current CO and XO spouses and introduce yourself, tell them about yourself, your family, where you plan to live, and when you will be arriving. That way, they will be able to plan for your arrival and help you get settled.

#### • You Are Leaving the Command

As soon as you hear from the prospective XO's spouse, it would be courteous to call or write and ask if there is anything you can do to help him/her get settled. After he/she arrives you might want to invite him/her to lunch. It is a great chance to answer any questions about the area, the command, and what you did as the XO's spouse.

### WORKING WITH THE CO'S SPOUSE

If you have decided to actively participate in the command, there are many things you can do to support the CO's spouse, the wardroom, and the command. What are some things you can do?

- Ask the CO's spouse what you can do to help. He/she will probably have ideas.
- Offer to assist with telephone calling or be in charge of the phone tree.
- Offer to attend meetings in the military and civilian community.
- Offer to hold social activities at your home.
- Keep the CO's spouse informed of new and prospective arrivals to the wardroom and the command.

Good communication between the CO and XO spouses is important. Feel free to talk things over with the CO's spouse and express your thoughts and feelings. If you can be each other's confidante and friend, even better. Also, there are times when the junior spouses may speak more freely to you than to the CO's spouse. If you hear of any concerns, you should pass them on to the CO's spouse.

You may enter a command where the CO's spouse has been a part of that unit for a number of months. If so, the previous XO's spouse is a good source of information about what to expect and can help you make a smooth transition. Also, contact the CO's spouse and ask how you can help and what might be expected of you.

If the CO's spouse is the newcomer to the command, you can help him/her make the transition easier by offering assistance, and informing them about the wardroom and command, current and past activities, etc. If there is a period of time between the departure and arrival of the old and new CO's spouses, then you can provide continuity in the group. Afterwards, it is

important to remember to step back into a supportive role to allow the new CO's spouse to establish his/her own unique role.

## UNIQUE SITUATIONS

As in life, not everything always goes according to plan. Below are some situations you may run into with some ideas and suggestions on how to proceed.

### You Have Chosen NOT to Actively Participate

If career, family, or other obligations prevent you from active participation or you have chosen not to participate in command activities, then you should relate your decision to the CO and his/her spouse. He/she is then free to ask the spouse of the next senior officer to fill in for you.

### You Have Not Co-Located with Your Spouse

This is a more common than in the past. Spouses, for personal reasons (job, schools, etc.) have decided not to move with their service member spouses when they take command. If this is your case, then as stated above, you should relate your plans to the CO and his/her spouse that you are unable to actively participate in the wardroom and the command so they may ask someone else to take over this supportive position.

Although you are not in the area, there may be things you can do to help the CO's spouse. A call offering to help in any way would be appreciated. Also, ask the CO's spouse if he/she will keep you informed of command and wardroom activities, and request if he/she or another spouse could be your point of contact during a deployment.

### The CO's Spouse Has Chosen NOT to Actively Participate

If the CO's spouse has decided not to actively participate in wardroom and command activities, then you may be asked to assume his/her leadership duties. It is up to you whether you want to accept the lead role.

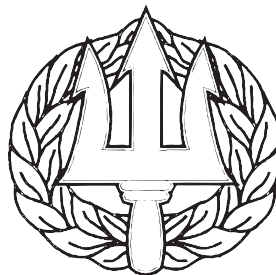
If the CO's spouse has taken an inactive position and has not contacted you within a reasonable period of time to ask you to assume his/her responsibilities, you should initiate the contact. Be open and indicate the need for command representation within the wardroom, the command, and the military community. Propose that while always keeping him/her informed, as well as keeping in mind the wishes of the command, you are willing to undertake the leadership responsibilities. Suggest that the two of you ask the next senior officer's spouse to assist you.

### The CO is Single or is a Geographic Bachelor

If you have decided you would like to take on the leadership role of the CO's spouse, then make contact with the Commanding Officer (perhaps, along with the XO) to discuss the responsibilities, perceptions, and goals of the position. At that time, you may suggest that the next senior officer's spouse assist you.



Sea Command Insignia



Shore Command Insignia

# THE MARINE CORPS CO/XO SPOUSE

As the spouse of the prospective Commanding Officer or Executive Officer, you will receive the benefit and guidance of the Marine Corps' Family Readiness Support Program. Through this program, outstanding publications are available to help your spouse and you enjoy a successful tour in command. Some of these include the Key Volunteer series (*Key Volunteer Guide*, *Key Volunteer Coordinator's Guide*, *Commanding Officer's Guide* and *Key Volunteer Network Training Guide*), *The Leader's Link* (covers all facets of command such as the Leader, the Marine, the Spouse, the Family, and deployment), and *Parade Rest* (a guide to protocol and social customs in the Marine Corps).



CO/XO SPOUSE

## COMMAND SEMINARS

Another excellent support program is the new prospective CO/XO seminars held for both spouses. Participants attend from all over the country and enjoy the benefits of speakers, discussion groups, and training guidelines. For more information, contact your Fleet and Family Support Center.

# THE COAST GUARD CO/XO SPOUSE

As you know, the Coast Guard is unique in its mission and size compared to the Department of Defense services. The Coast Guard is a small, seagoing service, with a very active, peacetime mission. The deployment of its vessels and aircraft is done independently, not in battle groups or squadrons, but often working in concert with other units in the patrol area. The Coast Guard's vessels and aircraft are smaller and deploy for shorter periods, but more frequently. Assignments to units in remote locations are normal. The Coast Guard family is often challenged with living not only in a small, remote, civilian community, but also in a very small Coast Guard Community.



## CO/XO SPOUSE

### THE ROLE OF THE CO/XO SPOUSE

Command in the Coast Guard can start as junior as the E-6 level for Officer-in-Charge of a small vessel or station. The CO/XO spouse needs to be mindful of resources available. Below are some tips, suggestions and ideas you might consider as you approach the role of CO/XO spouse:

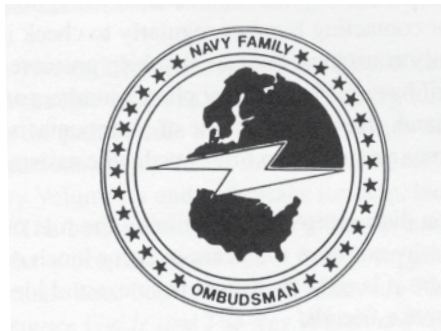
- Read and know the *Beneficiary Guide*, and *Balancing Work & Life*.
- Keep an up-to-date edition of the handbooks for TRICARE medical and dental programs.
- Cultivate a good working relationship with your Ombudsman. You will need his/her help like any other spouse at the unit.
- Do not become a liaison between the CO and the Ombudsman. Instead, encourage the direct communication between the two.
- Remember the Work/Life staffs are always there to answer questions and provide resources.
- If you need confidential assistance with a personal concern, use the Employee Assistance Program (1-800-523-5668). If you are located near a DOD base, you are eligible to use their Fleet and Family Support Center, too.

The spouses of the CO and XO, regardless of their spouses' rank and size of unit, are free to define their own roles in the civilian and Coast Guard communities. The goal of the Coast Guard is to strike a reasonable balance between work and the life of its members and their families. The days of white gloves and hats are gone along with the obligatory, formal dinner parties. Each spouse is seen as having individual talents, abilities, and other commitments. The only "obligation" of the CO and XO spouses is to define their own roles.

# THE NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN

## THE HISTORY OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Ombudsman Program was established by the Navy (OPNAV Instruction 1750.1) in 1970 in response to, and in recognition of, the needs of Navy families. Before the program's inception, the CO and/or XO spouses invariably performed the function of the Ombudsman. Today, with extensive training programs and support programs, the Navy Family Ombudsman is a highly trained volunteer who is able to offer support and guidance to command families and to act as an official liaison between the command and its families. The flexibility to evolve with the Navy and to adapt to the uniqueness of each command is the source of strength that allows the Ombudsman Program to fulfill its mission of assisting the command by serving the needs of its families.



## THE ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Navy Family Ombudsman Program is run by and shaped by the Commanding Officer and what he/she believes are the needs of the command. The Ombudsman is appointed by and works under the guidance of the CO. It is the CO who determines the priorities of the program, the roles and relationships of those involved in it, and the type and level of support it will receive. As a new CO or XO spouse, it is helpful to you if these roles and relationships are made clear and are understood by all of the members of the Command Support Team.

The Ombudsman position covers a variety of duties that include:

- Relating to family members the command's policies and wishes
- Keeping the command informed about the families' needs and concerns
- Serving as a source of information and acting as a referral service
- Being available and ready to help in case of emergencies

## WORKING WITH THE OMBUDSMAN

Although, as a CO or XO spouse, you do not fall within the official chain of command, your involvement and support of the Ombudsman Program can be a valuable asset. Also, your assistance to this program is another route for you to enhance the welfare of the command's families. Once you and your spouse have mutually determined what your role will be, it is important that all those involved in the Command Support

Team sit down together and discuss each other's part in providing for the morale and welfare of the families and single personnel in the command.

Some important things to consider and discuss when meeting with the Ombudsman are:

- Remember, he/she is a volunteer who has chosen to give of his/her time to the command and their families.
- Confidentiality restrictions prevent the Ombudsman from disclosing the identity of any cases in discussion with you, unless specifically instructed by the Commanding Officer.
- Your experience and knowledge of the Navy, its support programs, and what it is like to raise a family in the navy are important assets for the Ombudsman.
- Your openness to being called by the Ombudsman when he/she is feeling personally stressed, or your contacting him/her regularly to check in and ask how things are going, are not only courteous, but can also help preserve morale.
- The Ombudsman will have his/her official phone numbers and communication links with the command. However because of your contacts with other naval commands, many times you can also offer invaluable assistance in times of crisis or emergencies.

**SUGGESTION:** When discussing and determining the role of the members of the Command Support Team, why not have the Team over for lunch or dinner? In a relaxed, informal atmosphere it is easy to discuss business and ideas, get to know each other, establish roles, and make friends.

**SUGGESTION:** Most commands and naval communities sponsor an annual Ombudsman Appreciation Dinner or Luncheon. It would be a strong show of support if you and your spouse, including the XO and his/he spouse, attended.

## YOU SHOULD KNOW . . .

- In many commands, it is the CO's spouse or the XO's spouse who functions as an "unofficial" Ombudsman for the other officers' spouses. If this is the case in your command, discuss and clarify this role with the Ombudsman in order to maximize communication between you both. Don't assume the coordination will occur.

- The Ombudsman position is not a social one. He/she is not responsible for planning and organizing social activities for the command. He/she is welcome to help, but it is the responsibility of the other spouses to plan and initiate spouse and/or command social activities.

- If you are not familiar with the Navy Family Ombudsman program, you may wish to attend an Ombudsman training session. The participation of the CO, XO and CMC/COB spouses in the basic level training is both welcomed and encouraged.

- The secret to having a positive working relationship with the Ombudsman is **good communication**. Mutual respect for each other's role and genuine regard for each other should set the tone for the relationship. Developing mutual trust is the key factor that will enable each of you to feel confident and secure working together.

- The Navy values the Ombudsman program to such a large degree that all commands are required to have one. Commands are also required to register who their Ombudsman is with the Ombudsman Program Manager in Washington, D.C.



# THE MARINE CORPS

## KEY VOLUNTEER NETWORK

### THE HISTORY OF THE KEY VOLUNTEER

Today, there are more family members than active duty Marines; and with the draw-down in numbers, many units are currently spending 50 percent or more of their time away from home. In a recent poll, a married male sergeant with 3 children reported that he had been away from home for the last 21 holidays and birthdays. As long as the Marine Corps remains the Nation's force in readiness, and both Active and Reserve members realize they might be ordered to deploy on a moment's notice, it is clear that a communications channel between the Commanding Officer and unit families should be in place at all times.

The Key Volunteer Network has its origin in the Key Wife Program begun at MCAS Cherry Point in the late 1970s as part of the Family Readiness Support Program, and has evolved during the past decade into a Marine Corps-wide program. Marine Corps Order 1754.2 sanctions and sponsors the Key Volunteer Network. It provides official sanction for Key Volunteers and authorizes funding, based on availability, for certain specific needs. The basic role of the Key Volunteer has been defined; Commanding Officers have been educated about family support and communication networks; and four manuals have been published. They are *The CO's Reference Guide*, *The Key Volunteer Reference Guide* and *The Key Volunteer Participant's Guide*.

There are specific training requirements for all Network Volunteers. There is, also, the flexibility to structure the program for specific locales and for advanced training as requested or required. There are sections in all the manuals that are tailored to the unique requirements of the Marine Corps Reserve, Marines on recruiting duty, and other Marines on independent duty.

It is vitally important that all Commanding Officers, no matter what size command or staff element they are responsible for, realize that this is their program. The purpose is not to be a burden to the Commanding Officer or his/her spouse, but to assist the entire unit. The primary focus is to help families become self-sufficient and to match available resources to the needs of family members. Often, the Commanding Officer's spouse or a senior staff noncommissioned officer's spouse will act as an advisor to provide feedback to the Commander and to convey a positive attitude toward the program.

### THE KEY VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The Key Volunteer Coordinator for the unit is selected and appointed in writing by the Commanding Officer. Coordinators can be spouses of either an enlisted marine or an officer. They are charged with being the liaison between the Commanding Officer and the Key Volunteers of the unit. Other duties may include organizing a Network, coordinating training through the Fleet and Family Support Center, developing and distributing a unit newsletter, and recognizing Key Volunteers and their contributions.

All units have a Family Readiness Officer (FRO), selected by the Commanding Officer, who serves as the primary military Point of Contact (POC) between the Key Volunteers and the command/staff element. The FRO is responsible for providing a monthly updated roster of spouses, which includes addresses and phone numbers, to the

Key Volunteer Coordinator. The FRO provides administrative assistance to the Key Volunteer Network and is responsible for educating Marines in the unit about their family readiness responsibilities.

## **KEY VOLUNTEERS**

Key Volunteers are recommended by the Key Volunteer Coordinator and are appointed in writing by the Commanding Officer. They act as good role models for inexperienced spouses and are expected to respect the confidentiality of all members of the command or staff element. Breach of trust is cause for dismissal from the program. There are certain situations however, that require Key Volunteers to report family members, such as suspected child abuse cases.

Some of the resources for the Key Volunteer Network include updated manuals that reflect the most recent changes to the program, computers and answering machines dedicated solely to the Network at all Fleet and Family Support Centers, and a staff member in the Human Resources Division of Manpower and Reserve who is responsible for managing all Marine Corps Volunteer programs. These staffers work closely with the new standardized Network, answering questions from the field and providing support and advocacy for family readiness.



# THE COAST GUARD OMBUDSMAN

The Coast Guard is concerned that its members and their families are provided with information and assistance to minimize the disruptions of moving, deployment and to access necessary resources. In June 1986, the Coast Guard instituted an Ombudsman Program (Commandant Instruction 1750.4). The Ombudsman, known formally as the Command Family Representative, is a Coast Guard spouse who serves as a liaison between the unit Commanding Officer and the families.

The Ombudsman is a spouse who is designated by and responsible to the Commanding Officer, serving as a link between the command and families. The Ombudsman assists the command by providing information about activities of interest to family members. The Ombudsman Program offers several advantages to the unit, its personnel, and the Coast Guard in general.

- First, it provides the unit CO with a valuable advisor, someone who keeps the pulse of the members' families. For the Commanding Officer of a deploying command, it can be especially useful to know the concerns of command families and to be able to deal with these concerns before deployment rather than when the vessel is underway.
- Secondly, the program provides a channel between families and the command. The Ombudsman role is one of liaison, not that of a counselor. The Ombudsman should not substitute for the normal chain of command and must not impede routine unit working relationships. An Ombudsman is a means of two-way communication. This avenue can bring family concerns to the Commanding Officer's attention while allowing him/her an additional means of providing information and reassurance to these families. As a source of morale, its benefits can be very important.
- Thirdly, it provides a real opportunity for Coast Guard spouses to serve "their unit" in a meaningful position. Although this is clearly a volunteer post, it is one which is honored. At its best, this role can facilitate harmony and understanding within the unit, and can be a source of considerable individual satisfaction. The Ombudsman Program provides a way of serving alongside the service member spouse.

A meeting with the CO and spouse, XO and spouse, Senior Chief and spouse, and the Ombudsman should define priorities, roles/job description, and relationship with the Ombudsman that is evident to the unit families. This is the foundation of the support system for the deploying unit.

The Ombudsman Program belongs to the individual command and may vary according to the Commanding Officer's unit priorities and needs.

# COMMAND MASTER CHIEF'S SPOUSE OR CHIEF OF THE BOAT'S SPOUSE

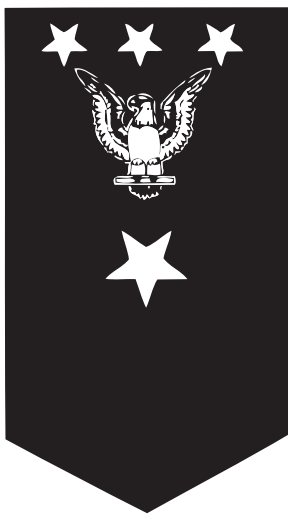
## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CMC/COB'S SPOUSE?

The spouse of the Command Master Chief (CMC) or the Chief of the Boat (COB) can play an important part in the Command Support Team. (Note: In the Coast Guard, another equivalent position to the Command Master Chief is the Command Enlisted Advisor or CEA). Just as the CO and XO spouses are looked to for leadership and support, so is the CMC/ COB's spouse. While he/she has no prescribed duties, active participation by the CMC/COB spouse gives the enlisted personnel and their families another important advocate and vital point of contact. Also, the CMC/COB's spouse can be added support for the Ombudsman, particularly during a stressful time for the command.

Special Note: CMC spouses are now also encouraged to attend the CMC Spouse Course with their CMC/COB.

## CMC/COB'S SPOUSE

## WORKING WITH THE CMC/COB'S SPOUSE



As the CO's spouse, in addition to contacting the XO's spouse and the Ombudsman, it is appropriate for you to call the CMC/COB's spouse to discuss what role, if any, he/she will play in the Command Support Team.

Because of their maturity and years of experience, spouses of CMCs, COBs and CPOs are, generally speaking, a valuable source of experience and support. Don't hesitate to ask their advice or opinion—they can be a fount of information.

If your command does not have a CMC/COB, or the CMC/COB is single or unaccompanied, the CO may ask the spouse of the senior Chief Petty Officer to assume this leadership position.

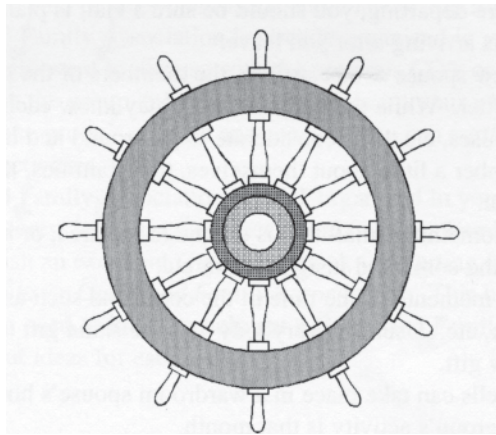
## THE MARINE CORPS SERGEANT MAJOR'S SPOUSE

For further explanation of this important role, or for more information, contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center. The Marine Corps provides thorough training about this position and publishes an excellent manual for your reference.

## THE WARDROOM SPOUSES' CLUB

In general, the Wardroom Spouses' Club consists of the spouses of the officers and chief warrant officers of the command. However, every wardroom in every command is different. In small commands, many times there is no division between officers, chief petty officers, and enlisted personnel-the spouses get together socially as one big group. In large commands, there is usually a division between enlisted, CPO, and officer personnel-each spouse group plans their own social get-togethers outside of command activities.

Just as your level of involvement in the command is voluntary, so is the involvement of the wardroom spouses. While they are encouraged to attend wardroom spouse functions (make friends, develop a support system, especially during deployment, get up-to-date information, etc.), it is their choice as to whether or not they want to participate. All you can do is make the group and its activities available to them.



### IF YOU HAVE AN ACTIVE CLUB . . .

If you have an active group of spouses, regardless of size or makeup, below are some tips for your wardroom spouses' club:

- Soon after your arrival, you might want to gather all the spouses together to find out what they have done in the past, what they want to do in the future, how often they want to meet, determine budgets and what people are willing to spend, etc.
- As the CO/XO spouse, you can't do it all. Depending on your group, you might want to have the spouses do one, some, or all of the following:
  - Treasurer-to keep track of the dues and gift buying.
  - Gift Buyer-to shop for the Farewell gift, welcome gift, shower gift, etc.;
  - Hospitality Chairman-to coordinate meals, etc., during joyous events (new baby, etc.) or in times of emergencies
  - Monthly Activity Sign-up-every few months, send around a sign-up sheet and let some of the spouses "take a month". They can plan the group activity for their month. That way, it doesn't all have to fall on your shoulders and the group benefits from new ideas.

- Dues are an excellent way to cover the costs of welcome gifts, farewell gifts, baby gifts, wedding gifts, etc. If your group can't afford dues, have some bake sales or other fund-raisers.
- Have a phone tree to get out the word on social activities, command activities, and other related news.
- Your club might want to get involved in charity or community volunteer organizations. Discuss together where your club's interests lie.

## HAILS AND FAREWELLS

As stated earlier, every command is different. Below are merely suggestions, ideas and considerations for the arrival and departure of command/wardroom spouses:

- The Hail and Farewell of the CO's spouse or XO's spouse can be done together or separately-it usually depends on the time of arrival of the new CO or XO spouse. If you are departing, you should be sure a Hail is planned for your successor if he/she is arriving after you leave.
- Hails-When a new spouse arrives, the members of the club are all strangers to him/her. While the club members may know each other's names, interests and spouses, etc., it is considerate to go around and have the spouses tell the new member a little about themselves, their families, their jobs, where they are from, etc.
- Welcome Gifts-something small that is unique to the area, or a command pen or coffee cup with the command insignia on it, etc.
- Farewell Gifts-a memento of the time in the command such as an engraved frame, plate, box, etc. Usually, everybody gets the same gift until the club decides on a new gift.
- Hails and Farewells can take place in a wardroom spouse's home, a restaurant, or wherever the group's activity is that month.

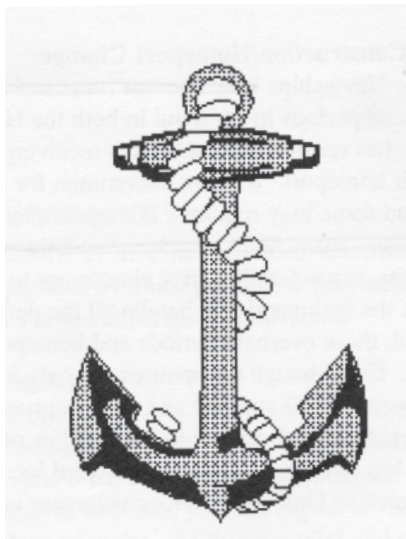
## THE COMMAND FAMILY ASSOCIATION

In general, the command family association consists of the spouses of the chief petty officers (CPOs) and enlisted personnel of the command. The purpose of the command family association is to give the spouses of enlisted personnel a way to get together, form friendships, develop a support system, get up-to-date information, etc.

However, every command is different. In small commands, many times there is no division between officers, chief petty officers, and enlisted personnel-the spouses get together socially as one big group. In large commands, there is usually a division between enlisted, CPO, and officer personnel - each spouse group plans its own social get-togethers outside of command activities.

As the CO's or XO's spouse, your role in the command family association is generally an advisory role in large commands and a leadership role in small commands.

- If a command family association is already organized in your spouse's command, you might want to discuss with the previous CO's or XO's spouse what he/she did with the group and what you might want your involvement to be, etc. Also, contact the group's officers and see how you can participate in, advise and support their activities.
- If a command family association is NOT organized in your spouse's command, and there is interest in starting, contact Naval Services FamilyLine in Washington, DC. We publish an excellent *Guidelines* book for starting such a group called *Launching Clubs or Command Family Associations*. This helpful guide outlines everything you need to know to help get a command family association going. It also has great ideas for established groups.



# THE NAVY COMMAND



## THE SEA COMMAND

A ship, boat, squadron, group, staff and detachment are examples of the many varied sea commands. These units have inport and deployment periods and may undergo a shipyard/new construction period. The needs of the crew and their families remain the same, but the priorities change as the periods change. Also, it is important to note that in sea commands the families are usually a more closely knit group than shore units; and therefore, the Command Support Team has a greater role.

### • Inport Period

Inport periods are a very critical and busy time for both the unit and families. The unit fills its time with inspections, repairs, personnel training, equipment testing and preparations for exercises and upcoming deployments.

The time inport is an excellent time for social activities and an opportunity to establish and/or maintain these activities in preparation for deployment. Establishing the email/telephone tree, the “buddy system”, planning monthly get-togethers, or children’s activities during inport times eases the transition when the inevitable deployment looms. (See the “Deployment” section in this book for further information.)

Most units will have Hails and Farewells, promotion parties, and/or holiday functions for either the command as a whole or in smaller groups, such as wardroom parties, the chiefs’ mess parties, or individual division functions.

### • Shipyard Period/New Construction/Homeport Change

Our Navy ships require more extended periods in overhaul in both the Navy and civilian shipyards. This has resulted in many ships receiving these repairs at repair facilities distant from their homeport. It is not uncommon for these shipyard periods to last 9 months to a year, and some may require a homeport change.

For a variety of reasons, many families may choose not to make the PCS move to the new homeport. While the command will handle all the details, as far as the spouses and families are concerned, these overhaul periods and homeport changes are akin to preparing for deployment. Even though the spouses are only a telephone call away, careful coordination between the CO and XO and the Command Support Team can ensure a free flow of information and support to the families of the command.

Usually, when a ship has families in both the shipyard location and the old homeport, the CO arranges to have an Ombudsman/Key Volunteer in each place to help maintain communication between the families and the command. Homeport changes require special efforts by the Command Support Team to assist in the resettling of families who have chosen to make the move. It is essential that the needs of the families who stay behind at the old homeport are not forgotten.



## THE AVIATION COMMAND

While almost everything mentioned in “The Sea Command” applies to aviation commands, there are a few things that are unique to the aviation community.

### • The Element of Danger

Naval aviation presents an element of additional danger into the lives of everyone in the community, including families. They are periodically faced with the reality of accidents and fatalities. This is the most difficult challenge for the CO and XO spouses. It is important to disseminate information to all families as soon as possible with specific instructions on the wishes of those directly involved. It is also important to maintain your composure and a calm, confident, compassionate demeanor in an attempt to avoid hysteria amongst the spouses-particularly if the squadron is deployed.



## THE SUBMARINE COMMAND

The Sea Command and the Submarine Command are similar yet different. While they share similar inport periods, overhaul periods, deployments and homeport changes, the Submarine Command’s at-sea experience is different.

### • The Communication Challenge

A submarine’s unique operating style and limited availability to receive mail makes communicating at sea particularly difficult. E-mail has recently improved this historical challenge. The ability to send e-mail from and receive e-mail on submarines continues to improve with technology. In addition, you can expect to receive strong, central support from the home squadron or group. As this is a vital and valuable resource for you, please become familiar with your contact person at the squadron or group.

### • Small Crew Size

Due to the small size of the crew on submarines, one Ombudsman may be adequate, two may work better, but this is a personal decision for the CO to make. When more than one Ombudsman is available, then when one rotates out, the other is still serving, which makes for a much smoother transition and operation. It also allows one to take occasional time off without leaving the families without an available Ombudsman. The Ombudsman generally acts on behalf of the CPO’s spouses as well as the spouses of the other enlisted personnel. Usually, the wardroom spouses will feel comfortable confiding in the XO’s or CO’s spouse. During homeport changes or overhaul situations, when family members remain in the permanent homeport, it may be helpful to have an additional Ombudsman at that location.



Socially, wardroom spouses gather as desired. Due to relatively small numbers, it is not unusual for all the spouses to come together, especially during deployments.

## THE SHORE COMMAND

Not all commands go to sea. Much of what is discussed in this booklet is equally applicable to sea or shore commands. While commands ashore generally do not face the trauma invoked by deployments, they do experience duty nights, special trips, detachments operations, and a variety of other activities that create similar frustrations.

The leadership roles in the Command Support Team are still crucial to the command's mission: A CO/XO spouse who cares and is willing to listen and help; an Ombudsman/Key Volunteer who may have fewer crisis calls, but is still valuable; and a CMC's spouse who may find his/her role increased in importance.

### • The Command Secretary

In a shore command, the CO's secretary can be an important ally. This person is usually the command's corporate memory, and it is the wise person who seeks to have a good, working relationship with him/her. He/she can keep you informed of command functions you might want, or need, to attend such as award and retirement ceremonies, "all-hands" parties, or any event where your presence would be welcomed and appreciated.

### • Social Activities

By nature, the families in a shore command are usually not as closely knit a group as in a sea command. It is typical to expect less group activities or participation since there is generally less of a need for a support structure. Some suggestions to get the diverse groups on base together may include working towards a common goal, i.e., a food drive for needy families at Thanksgiving, a Christmas wrapping booth on base to raise money for toys for children (or Toys-for-Tots, for example), or a bake sale to raise funds to buy something special for the local military medical facility.

### • Military Spouse Club Advisor

Often, military spouse clubs are more prevalent in shore communities and you, as the CO/XO's spouse, may be asked to be an honorary member and/or advisor on the club's executive board. In your role as advisor, you must make certain that command policies are not jeopardized. Let them know you are there to show personal and command support, and that you are not a "spy" for the command.

### • Volunteering and The Community

You should not necessarily think of your role as stopping at the station boundary. You and your spouse are representatives of the naval service in the local civilian community. Also, since demands from the spouses are generally not as great, you may find yourself with more time to volunteer in naval and civilian community organizations, if you choose.

Command priorities, mutual family interests, your family makeup and a variety of other factors will determine the level of your family's participation in naval and civilian





organizations and community activities. Remember though, you have an excellent opportunity to “spread the word” to civilian friends about the naval service and its mission. Pride in family, in your spouse’s assignment, and in the military overall will show.

Many civilian acquaintances may have, or previously have had, family members in the naval service. They too are proud of their relatives and generally are quite pleased to find the military today led by well-qualified, dedicated service members whose spouses support them.

## THE STAFF COMMAND

### • Supply Corps

The broad responsibilities of the Supply Corps include providing equipment and parts to sea and shore commands, operating food and hotel services, running the Navy Exchanges, and handling various administrative duties such as financial management, data processing and inventory control.

While Supply Corps officers serve side-by-side with their line counterparts on shore and at sea all over the world, Supply Corps commands are shore commands. The discussion of “The Shore Command” is certainly relevant to Supply Corps CO/XO spouses. Your participation in the Supply Corps’ officer spouse club, the celebration of Hails and Farewells and volunteering in the naval and civilian community are an integral part of a Supply Corps command.

Also, the spouses and families of the officers and enlisted personnel of the Supply Corps command deal with the same issues and have the same concerns as the personnel of other shore commands. As the CO/XO spouse of a Supply command, it is helpful to be knowledgeable about your community, shopping and recreation areas, availability of military and community housing and local medical care procedures. Providing a welcoming sponsor to incoming families is always appreciated.

### • Judge Advocate General Corps

Individual commands within the Judge Advocate General’s Corps are called Naval Legal Service Office (NLSO) commands. CO/XO spouses of a NLSO serve the families assigned to their spouse’s command. NLSOs vary in size from small offices of seven lawyers, plus support personnel, to larger offices of forty lawyers and personnel.

Activities vary depending on group dynamics. Groups may have individual customs and needs determined by the number of working spouses, young children, geographical location, etc. Encourage the members of the group to participate in designing a supportive community based on present circumstances.

Hail and Farewells have always been a social backbone in the naval community and continue to serve a vital role in many NLSOs. Be sure to include the lawyers and spouses assigned to other area commands. They may be very busy socially, but welcome the time spent with fellow JAG Corps friends, old and new.

Although all NLSOs are ashore, either in CONUS or overseas, personnel frequently deploy on temporary duty assignments. Assure their spouses that the legal command is available at any time to provide support. In addition to personal support or assistance from the command, it is advisable to have an understanding of other available services such as the Red Cross, Fleet and Family Support Centers, etc.



The spouses and families of the officers and enlisted personnel of the NLSO face the same issues and have the same concerns as the personnel of other shore commands. It is helpful to be conversant with local school issues, shopping and recreation areas, availability of military and community housing and local medical care procedures. Providing a welcoming sponsor to incoming families is invaluable.

You may be asked for legal advice about wills, landlord/tenant problems, etc. The NLSO phone number is all that is necessary.

#### • **Medical Corps/Dental Corps**

For CO/XO spouses of a medical command, activities will vary with the size and location of the command. The “wardroom” size will vary from as few as 20 officers at a small clinic, to as many as 1200-1300 at one of the major teaching hospitals. This puts an entirely different perspective on “having the wardroom over for a ‘Hail and Farewell’”. Building an esprit de corps and teaching military tradition is an important focus. This can be done by: helping to ensure that command members and their families receive a warm welcome and receive information about family support resources in the area. In the large commands, a team approach is essential; involve (not only) the CO/XO spouses, but also the command Ombudsman, CMC spouse and spouses of the Directorates. Be sure to take advantage of opportunities to meet and work with other military spouses, especially line Navy and Marine Corps spouses. It will give you an excellent opportunity to learn and better understand the mission of the Navy and Navy medicine.

#### • **School Commands**

For the CO/XO spouses of a school command, he/she might direct his/her attention to the needs of the students and their families. Keeping in mind that neither the student nor his/her family will be in the area long enough to become fully acquainted with the diversions of the community, offer them opportunities to participate in command and community social gatherings. Try to give the students and their families a sense of belonging to the naval service community.

Special Note - Individual Augmentees (IAs) are sailors called upon to augment forward deployed forces. They should still be considered by Ombudsman/CO's spouses as part of the original command and support services should be provided.



# THE COAST GUARD COMMAND

## THE SEA COMMAND

The Coast Guard has many vessel commands that range in size and mission. There are several types of small vessels with missions that vary from maintaining aids to navigation, hazardous spills and search and rescue. These small vessels are located on the coast, inland waterways and the Great Lakes. Their deployment schedule depends on their mission and geographic area of responsibility. The icebreakers and cutters, which are larger vessels, usually cover bigger patrol areas with set mission objectives that include law enforcement, fisheries patrol and ice breaking.



### • Deployments

Icebreakers are usually deployed for five months, high-endurance cutters for two months, and medium-endurance cutters for four to six weeks. Families have a “stick together” attitude and have their own community within the larger community. By sharing the same experiences, family members have a sense of “automatic” empathy with unit families as they go through the emotional stages of deployment. Without the service members being available to access the military system for them, the spouses look to the Ombudsman for the support needed during deployments. The Ombudsman, in turn, begins his/her access into the resources required. The CO/XO spouses who have settled, and feel comfortable in their self-designed roles, can use the deployment time creatively in carrying out their activities.

### • Inport Period

Inport times vary in length according to the deployment schedule. For example, cutters out for two months are usually home for two months. Inport periods always seem like hectic times. There is a list of things the command must complete before the next deployment, families are trying to have time together and other time-consuming events occur. Even when the unit is in, it doesn’t mean the member is home. What with standing duty, going to training/school, making repairs, preparing for inspections, completing paperwork, and doing drills, the service member has limited free time.

However, the unit is able to take time during the inport period to have sports activities, family get-togethers, holiday parties and Hails and Farewells. Depending on the size of the unit, these parties are held for the whole unit or by smaller groups within the unit.

### • Shipyard Period/New Construction/Homeport Change

The Coast Guard shipyard is located at Curtis Bay, Maryland. This shipyard handles some repairs to ships on the East and Gulf Coasts. At other times, the Coast Guard bids for shipyard assignments. Notification of the location where the yard repairs will take place is usually made shortly before the move. Shipyard periods vary in length according to repairs and contract completion.

The Coast Guard changes homeports after careful consideration of mission and vessel compatibility. If a ship changes homeport, the command, with the help of the transportation office and the Work-Life staff, will handle all necessary arrangements for service members and families. Every effort is made to ensure that the families are settled at the new homeport.

New ships have a pre-commissioning crew stationed at the shipyard about a year before the completion date. They work with the construction firm during the final stages of construction. After the commissioning, the new ship and crew proceeds to the homeport and, assuming everything is in order, takes its place on the patrol schedule.

Shipyard periods, pre-commissioning and homeport changes are very stressful on the members and their families. The unit command, the Ombudsman and the Work-Life staff realize the hardships involved and the effects on everyone. Their goal is to offer support and resources in order to reduce stress and increase the quality of life. The CO/XO spouses can help by supporting the hard work of the Ombudsman, participating when possible in unit functions and being available to listen to the unit families' concerns.

## THE AVIATION COMMAND

Coast Guard air stations are divided into three groups. The first group has both helicopters and fixed wing, the second group has only helicopters, and the third group has only fixed wing. The Coast Guard does not deploy in wings or squadrons. The aircraft are sent out individually as required by the mission. The longest deployment would be with an ice breaker for five months. During deployments, the families stay at the home air station and are supported by program resources of the command and community. In the event of an accident or fatality, the spouses and Ombudsman organize to help the family, while the command handles the official duties. The CO/XO spouses can be a great help as liaison between the family and the community, and as a positive, calm influence for the rest of the shaken community.

## THE SHORE COMMAND

Shore command may lead to thoughts of the member being home most nights and on a regular working schedule. This is only partially true. The Coast Guard has several shore commands that require frequent, and sometimes lengthy, operations that take them away from the home unit location. Regardless of the mission, the support of the Ombudsman and the Command are still essential. The CO/XO spouses can offer support just by being caring, good listeners.

# THE OVERSEAS TOUR

There is one thing that is predictable about going overseas – it is going to be different. Be prepared to have everything take on a new color and meaning. Keeping an open mind can make all the difference in the world.

## • Special Challenges

Because you are the spouse of the CO or XO, the other command spouses may rely on you more than when you are CONUS. The Ombudsman/Key Volunteer will be an invaluable ally.

Two major challenges involve communication and transportation. In some areas, there is limited, if any, telephone service and often transportation is equally limited or nonexistent. Communication is important not only between the command families, but also with loved ones CONUS. Some spouses may suffer a feeling of abandonment if the unit deploys. A well-organized and well-led Support Group makes an enormous difference overseas.

The naval service makes many resources available to you to help make this tour a memorable and rewarding experience. Plan ahead and USE these resources. The Fleet and Family Support Center/Family Readiness Center/Work-Life Center is a tremendous help before you go and while you are there. Each center is responsible for base and intercultural orientation programs.

Each service member and service family going overseas should have a sponsor assigned by the command, be sent a welcome aboard package by the command, and receive a welcome letter from the Ombudsman. Try to have someone in your Support Group meet each newcomer as soon as they arrive and offer information about the base services, etc.

## • Entertaining

In most overseas countries, the rules of entertaining differ greatly from those in the United States. As the CO/XO spouse, you may be in the position of entertaining local dignitaries. The base commander's office will have a protocol officer assigned who will be able to answer any questions you may have. It is best to ask questions before entertaining to save any embarrassment.

## • Life in a Fishbowl

A few words of caution: Some small overseas duty stations may become “goldfish bowls”. Be careful of what you say or do. Remember that overseas duty means you are living in a foreign country. You are the guest. Be aware of all security precautions and be careful of your discussions in public. Obey all local base laws as well as host country laws. Be certain every spouse in the Support Group is also aware of the laws. A good reference guide to read before going overseas is the Naval Services FamilyLine publication *Overseasmanship*, currently available on-line by the Bureau of Naval Personnel under the “pubs” heading at the following web site:

[www.persnet.navy.mil/pers66/ombudsman1/start.htm](http://www.persnet.navy.mil/pers66/ombudsman1/start.htm).

## DEPLOYMENTS

Deployments are a fact of naval life and require special efforts by everyone. Emotions can vary from the fear of being alone through the worry of not enough communication to the anticipation of the return home.

Special Note - It is important to be aware of the Navy's Fleet Response Plan (FRP). FRP means sea-going commands must be ready at any given time to be called for service.

### PRE-DEPLOYMENT

Generally, the command will sponsor a pre-deployment meeting that is usually mandatory for service members and recommended for spouses. Because it is important for service members and their families to have their financial and legal papers in order, spokespeople from the naval community usually come and speak about allotments, housing, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Fleet and Family Support Center, important phone numbers, chaplain services, legal services, etc. Other topics include the importance of the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer, up-to-date I.D. cards, knowing where to take the car when it breaks down, writing letters, etc.

Also, the CO may discuss the command's schedule (and the likelihood of schedule changes) and answer questions. This is a good time for the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer to be introduced and make sure everybody has his/her phone number. If any initial social activities have been planned for spouses and families, this is an opportune time to announce them.

#### • Email and Telephone Trees

Not only is a roster an important ally, an in-place and working email and telephone tree is invaluable. It is used to relay messages in an efficient manner without undue effort by anyone and should be set up before deployment. Discuss with the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer how communications will be set up; he/she will appreciate your assistance. Note: Spouses are not automatically on the email or phone tree—they must sign up and approve participation in either. The phone tree callers cannot call a spouse with official information unless he/she is on the phone tree. Also, depending on your command, you may prefer to set up your own email or phone tree with the officer spouses.

If the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer and you maintain good credibility by always informing the spouses with FACTS, then you will do an enormous job towards preventing rumors and reassuring spouses.

Many commands have a "Careline" number for spouses and families to call and listen to a taped message with news and information about the command, social activities, etc. Usually updated by the Ombudsmen, Carelines are a voicemail message from a phone number distributed to command families.

#### • Buddy System

This period of separation can be a trying time for the spouse left at home. Some people handle separations better than others. You may have a command with a number of spouses who will be completely alone during the deployment. Everyone needs someone to talk to during this lonely time and the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer cannot talk to everyone everyday.

One idea to help ease the loneliness is the "buddy system". During deployment, those spouses who are interested have a "buddy" he/she can talk to (at least every third day is recommended). Nothing is required other than "Hello, I'm fine, how are you? Talk to you later." If a spouse does not hear from or cannot reach his/her buddy within

three days, the CO's spouse or Ombudsman/Key Volunteer should be informed. If no one has had contact with this spouse, then his/her residence should be visited to make certain everything is okay. It is also a good idea to have each "buddy" let the other know if they will be out of town and how to be reached in an emergency. This system works well in ensuring the safety and well being of the command families during deployments. Once again, what works in one command may not work in others.

#### • **Support Command/Sister Ship**

If possible, meet with the contact people from the support command or sister ship. This meeting, which should be arranged by the CO, can be an informal get-together. Introduce yourself, the XO's spouse, the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer, and other Command Support Team leaders and continue to work with them during the deployment.

#### • **Emergency Data Sheets**

More and more commands are turning to Emergency Data Forms for spouses. Spouses fill out the information sheet that is kept at the offices of the support command, the sister ship, or the base command during deployments. These forms can help find parents and give important daily information about children, pets, medical problems, friends, job, church, CACO request, etc.

## **WARDROOM SPOUSE GROUP AND COMMAND FAMILY ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES**

Usually during deployments, officer and enlisted spouse groups increase their levels of recreational activities so that the actual separation is less emphasized. No matter whether these are information sessions, educational seminars, or social functions, the coordinated efforts of the Command Support Team can help ensure that planned activities are meaningful and well-received by all. As discussed earlier in the book, it depends on your command as to how the spouse groups are organized.

Before the deployment, it is a good idea to meet and plan activities for spouses and families while the command is deployed.

- **Planning Committee/Spouse Hospitality Group** – a group of volunteers plan and discuss ideas for get-togethers that might include children or just spouses. Also, they can plan how often the group will want to get together (once a week, twice a month, once a month, for example). After the first functions are held, more will want to join in planning future events.
- **Remember, the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer is not allowed to be the social director** so be sure the group has a committee or individuals willing to take on the responsibility of initiating the first couple of activities.

### **Activity Ideas**

Your group will have its own ideas. Discuss them all and see how many the group wants to utilize. Keep in mind that activity is a must during a deployment, but don't overdo it either. Also, vary the times and the activities so that most of the spouses can participate in something – talents, abilities and interests are not all the same. Below are some suggestions for making it through a deployment – and having a good time!



- **Tapings:** Although most Command Family Associations arrange for a mid-deployment taping to send to the command, you might also want to supplement the taping with more videos. In this age of “everyone has a video camera”, you can tape a lot of your get-togethers and send them to the command. If the command also has a video camera, suggest to your spouse that the command also take videos while deployed. It’s a great way for the families to see mom or dad at sea.

- **Tours:** Many times the families find new and exciting places to explore while dad/mom is deployed – especially if they are new to the area. Get together with some other spouses and children and explore local sightseeing places, museums, etc. Don’t forget, parents need a day off from the children once in awhile, so adult-only tours are also helpful.

- **Holidays:** Invariably, naval units deploy during holidays. It is always a benefit to everyone if these special occasions are recognized with some sort of a Command Family Association get-together. Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s, Valentine’s Day, Easter and the Fourth of July are all easy times to plan for and get-together. Don’t forget Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, President’s Day, Columbus Day, St. Patrick’s Day and others.

For fun, try celebrating some of our “National Weeks” such as National Chocolate Week, National Be-Nice-To-Mom/Dad-Week” or make up your own week!

- **Food:** Potlucks, dessert parties, barbecues, picnics, restaurant outings, brunch, progressive dinners – you name it, and if it involves food, it’s always a success. Try international nights where each person brings a dish from a different country, or designate a particular country as a theme and have everybody or a committee bring the “native” dishes. Try a low-fat, no-cholesterol dinner where each recipe must fit the guidelines. Exchange recipes after the dinner. If you can get a large group of your spouses together, ask a local restaurant if the chef could come and give a gourmet cooking demonstration (with taste-testing afterwards, of course!). NOTE: Be wary of serving alcohol at such get-togethers. You don’t want to worry about serving minors or others leaving your home driving under the influence of alcohol.

- **Service Projects:** Every community needs volunteers. Perhaps during a deployment your group may help a local service organization on a regular basis, such as committing to one day a week at the Navy-Marine Corps Thrift Shop. Telethons and other public fund-raisers are usually in need of volunteers to answer telephones.

- **Hail and Farewells:** The arrival of newcomers and the departure of old friends should never receive casual treatment, especially when the command is deployed. It is difficult being the new person coming into an established group. It is even more difficult leaving old friends behind when moving to a new assignment. These aspects of naval service life provide ideal occasions for group activities.

- **Children:** Kids love picnics and they are a great way to involve them in a command activity. Holidays are also an ideal time to include children in group activities.



Christmas parties are always successful, but don't forget Valentine's, Easter and Halloween. These gatherings can be a good opportunity to acknowledge special accomplishments such as scholastic, sport and scouting awards.

• **Potpourri of Ideas:** Play sports among yourselves or challenge other groups in softball, bowling, tennis, golf, putt-putt golf, etc. Go ice-skating or roller-skating. Attend a lecture series, make-up artistry sessions, interior decorating seminars, or Red Cross/CPR demonstrations. Go to a comedy club. Make "care packages" or Christmas stockings for the deployed command (don't forget the single personnel). Have a dessert party and share wedding albums. Hire a fortune teller. It is amazing the ideas and resources your group, large or small, officer and/or enlisted, can have to support each other and to contribute to the camaraderie during the deployment.

**HAVE FUN!**

## TRAVEL

Deployments often provide an opportunity for a spouse and/or children to travel. This travel can be to family and friends, a weekend excursion with other spouses, or a trip to meet the command overseas.

There are wonderful places to visit overseas with new and unusual lifestyles to experience. If you can afford it, do not hesitate to take advantage of the situation. In most instances, the opportunity to "tag along" cannot be recaptured. A note of caution: As the CO/XO's spouse, your enthusiasm and encouragement to other spouses to join in on the overseas visits should be tempered with a warning about the high cost of such travel. Some of the officer and/or enlisted spouses may misinterpret your encouragement to mean: "I must go at any cost because the CO/XO's spouse said so".

Flexibility is the key word when traveling to meet the command. Advise spouses to have contingency travel plans in the event the unit's schedule has unexpected changes – which happens all the time! It is advisable that no one travel alone overseas not only for security reasons, but also so that no one is left alone in a foreign country without a traveling companion.

## THE REALITIES OF DEPLOYMENT

Unfortunately, it is not always fun and games during a deployment. There can be serious times and situations too. It is important for you to know how to handle things and know where to turn to when you are needed as an advisor and are asked for guidance.

### • Rumors

You can do no greater service to your group during a deployment than to do everything possible to curb the inevitable rumors. Many times, rumors are the product of wishful thinking, frustration, or half-overheard remarks. Most rumors will quickly find their way to either the CO/XO's spouse or the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer.

- Play the skeptical optimist and try to uncover the source as best as you or the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer can.
- Check the facts that are available, verify them with proper authorities, then disseminate the information to all the spouses as quickly as possible.
- To be able to troubleshoot rumors quickly and accurately, establish a few

reliable, official sources of information BEFORE the deployment.

- If a tragedy occurs, you will be asked for information by the spouses and the media may want information. Speculation about “what happened” is treacherous and by all means, you should avoid it! The “right to know” does not take priority over the right to individual privacy.

Remember, just because a series of facts appears connected and forms a logical conclusion does not mean it is always so – beware!

#### • **Schedule Changes**

Although most service members keep their spouses and families reasonably well informed of where they are and what they are doing while deployed, changes occur. The nature of current operations around the world makes a change in schedule or a port visit almost the norm rather than the exception, and often with only a few hours notice.

#### • **Security**

For obvious reasons, unit’s schedules are classified information. Be careful what information you share with others and be especially careful of what you say in front of children. They do not fully understand how to keep secrets. When out in public, be careful who may be listening to your conversations. If in doubt, don’t say anything.

As spouse of the CO or XO, you may at times have information best left untold. You should be cautious in telling everything you know, whether it be to other military spouses, someone in the civilian community, or the news media. Refer to the “Guidelines for Media Inquiries” section in this book for more information about working with the media.

### **Emergencies**

Many commands publish a helpful information booklet about where to turn and/or what to do when problems or emergencies happen while service members are deployed.

- While the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer can be relied upon to handle things, it is not unusual for spouses to call you for reassurance and assistance because you are someone they feel is in authority. Remember, any personal information should be kept confidential.
- Many times, it is wiser to leave some decisions and counseling to professionals. Keep all the necessary phone numbers (Ombudsman/ Key Volunteer, Chaplain, Fleet and Family Support Center/Family Readiness Center, Family Advocacy, Legal Assistance Office, Navy-Marine Corps Relief, Red Cross and others) close at hand along with a good map of the area to help with directions, if necessary.
- Often, in time of critical injury or death to a service member or family member, especially while deployed, the facts surrounding the situation will come much more slowly than the loved ones will think appropriate – it’s always this way! Sometimes the situation may not be clearly known or understood in the deployed unit itself. Each Commanding Officer has the obligation to pass along

to the families all pertinent information as quickly as possible. Be assured that he/she will! NOTE: Before a deployment, you should discuss this delicate matter with your spouse and decide how each of you are to proceed should the need arise.

- For more information on handling emergencies, refer to the “Guidelines for Emergencies” section in this book.

## HOMECOMING

Most support groups like to plan a special homecoming for the unit’s return. Planning for this special event and other ongoing projects can consume a great deal of the deployment time. Below are some ideas and considerations when planning for your homecoming. Your support command or sister ship can help you with some of the ideas.

- **Fund-raisers:** Whether money is needed to help defray some of your activities’ costs or to help with the preparations for homecoming, your group must raise these funds on its own. Try to make these fund-raisers as inexpensive a possible for everyone involved. Popular projects include: recycling, bake sales, yard sales, car washes, and Chinese auctions. NOTE: If you have any questions about the legality of your activity, check with the legal assistance office. It is better to be sure before you begin than to be sorry later.

- **Ideas:** Banners and leis are popular welcome-home items. Band appearances are festive; some groups even hire D.J.s. Balloons or individual roses for the service members are other ideas that have been done. Home-baked cookies, cakes and other foods are always welcomed by the returning units.

- **Ongoing Activities:** One idea is to prepare a “Cruise Book”. One command support group had an “official photographer” (the group supplied the film) during all the functions and special projects throughout the deployment. They also requested other pictures of special events from spouses and families. The book was assembled by, funded by, and given to every spouse in the unit’s Support Group. One Support Group’s cruise book was in print 4 months before the service members received their deployment cruise book! The one who could get their book out first became quite a challenge for the next deployment!

## HELPFUL HINTS

Below are a few important reminders and tips for you during deployment:

- Remember, you come first. Do not overextend yourself. If you need help, ask for it. Even though everyone looks at you as a miracle worker, no one really expects it.
- Get involved with your peer group. Most units deploy as part of a squadron or battle group, and other CO/XO’s spouses would probably also like to get together. You can all be a great support to each other.
- Try to be positive and keep a sense of humor. If the CO/XO’s spouse is worried or anxious, the others may think they are not being told of a problem in

the command.

- Relax. Do not wait for a problem to occur. It may not!! Remember that the other spouses are waiting for clues from you. Your calmness when there has been no mail (or e-mail) for a long period of time will help relax the others.
- Be compassionate and understanding without over-involvement or pity.
- Get acquainted with the other spouses in your command family – it's more fun when you get together.
- Use an answering machine. You won't miss important calls while you're at work or out, and you can screen calls if you are busy at home. Some CO/XO's spouses suggest a cordless telephone as there are times when you spend a great deal of time on the phone. Consider getting "caller-id" as well. It helps record who may have called and not left a message, or identify crank callers.
- If you make a mistake, smile; it is not the end of the world. Be yourself.

### **A MESSAGE TO SHARE WITH ALL THE SPOUSES AND FAMILIES OF THE DEPLOYED COMMAND**

It is most important to remember that although your loved one is deployed, you are not alone. There are many others who share your frustrations and anxieties, sorrows and joys, and hopes and prayers. There are others who have experienced these same emotions at other times, and they are there for you to reach out to if you need a sympathetic ear.

BUT, you are the only person in control of how you handle the separation of a deployment. If you keep yourself busy and your attitude upbeat, you may be surprised at how quickly the time flies. Don't sit back expecting problems or tragedies to occur; they are not common occurrences. You CAN enjoy this time of separation. Take up new projects, learn new skills, or reacquaint yourself with old ones. Be active – the day of homecoming is just around the corner!

## GUIDELINES FOR EMERGENCIES

In the event of a command emergency, either you or the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer may be the first person notified by the parent command. In some parent commands, an officer is designated as the official Point of Contact (POC) for the emergency situation. As the CO/XO's spouse, it is a good idea to be familiar with the notification procedure.

If you are the first person contacted, you will be informed by this officer as to what is expected of you and the Command Support Team. If individual service members have been involved, their spouses will be officially notified in person.

NOTE: While you may be informed initially, it can happen that you are not kept informed as things evolve. While the POC is a valuable resource, it is a good idea for you to have emergency contact numbers yourself who can provide you with current information. You can also call the POC yourself instead of waiting for him/her to call you – they can be very busy.

### • Get the Information Out Quickly

If the POC wants you to pass along details of the information available to all the families, then every attempt must be made to contact every spouse at home or at work as soon as possible. Getting the information out quickly is most important so families do not hear the news first from the media. Your first call should be to the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer. If you have not already set up a procedure the two of you will follow for emergencies, then decide now what approach you are going to take.

One of the best ways to disseminate information is through the telephone tree. It is extremely important that the same information be passed on to each spouse in the exact same words. To be certain of accuracy, write down the information given to you by the POC word for word. Do not engage in speculation – this is not the time to discuss opinions of what happened. Remember, any comments you make could be misinterpreted as fact just because you are the CO/XO's spouse. Assure all spouses that as new information is given out, they will be contacted through the telephone tree.

Another excellent way to get the information out is by putting a message on the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer "Careline". The Ombudsman/Key Volunteer can update the message as he/she gets new information.

Suggest that each spouse keep the telephone line open and also keep either you or the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer informed of his/her whereabouts. If the POC suggests an all-spouse get-together, do what can be done to get as many together as possible. Try to keep any who cannot attend fully informed.

### • Handling the Media

Unfortunately, emergency situations are headline news. A member of the press may contact you, the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer, or any other spouse for comment. No family member is required to have any contact with the media. Should these types of calls occur, you may inform the Public Affairs Office and ask for assistance. The official POC will keep you and the families fully informed.

Please refer to the "Guidelines for Media Inquiries" (on page 37) for further discussion.

### • Emergency Support Services

Don't feel all alone in times of emergencies. There are outstanding support services to call upon and rely upon to help you and the spouses involved to weather the storm. The **Chaplain Corps** and the **American Red Cross** are excellent. For more information about these organizations, please refer to the "Support and Resource Services" section on page 38.

### CACP (CASUALTY ASSISTANCE CALLS PROGRAM)

The Casualty Assistance Calls Program (CACP) was instituted to provide a broad range of assistance to the next of kin of a service member who is critically ill or injured, missing, or deceased. The CACP is coordinated by the Commander, Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS); but each service area Type Commander has a CACP officer on the staff. The CACP also helps the naval service family receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

If the service member is hospitalized CONUS, the next of kin is notified by either the hospital or the parent command. If the hospitalization is overseas, notification will come from either the parent command or BUPERS. Travel to the hospital CONUS, food and lodging expenses are normally incurred by the next of kin. If travel overseas is requested by the attending physician, authorization for government-procured travel may come from BUPERS.

In cases where the service member has died, has been captured, or is missing, notification to the next of kin will be made, **in person**, by a Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO). The notification is also confirmed by telegram. The uniformed CACO is an active duty officer or a senior enlisted person and is normally accompanied by a chaplain on the initial visit to the family. The CACO can advise the family concerning burial, internment, immediate financial relief, legal assistance, transportation, and survivor benefits as the situation warrants. The CACO continues as the naval service official liaison with the family until all entitlements have been received.

In the event a service member is seriously injured or dies while on leave or at home, a family member must notify the service member's commanding officer or the nearest military facility immediately. The family should give the service member's name, rank or rate, social security number, home address and any available details of the injury or death.

The CO/XO's spouse and the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer can assist the family with various support services during such an emotional and stressful time. It must be remembered that the CACO cannot discuss with you any confidential information discussed between the family and himself/herself. If you are assisting in a casualty situation, any concerns, questions, or information you have should be directed to either the CACO involved or the CACP office at the nearest military facility.

## GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES

Below are some tips for handling media inquiries, avoiding media inquiries and talking to the media.

- Know who the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) is that you should contact should the need arise.
- Anytime your spouse's name or command appears in the media, you may be contacted by a member of the press. Remember, you are under no obligation to speak to the media.
- The best advice you can receive concerning how to handle the media is, when asked for comment, get the reporter's name, employer, and telephone number, and let the PAO work with the reporter. If your unit is deployed, the support command will have a PAO who will be more than happy to assist you with the press.
- You may be asked for comment on situations you know a great deal about or know nothing about. An answer that covers everything is, "Let me refer you to our PAO..." Be sure to provide the PAO's name and phone number.
- If you do talk to the press, your comments should be carefully thought out, positive in tone, and should not contain any information regarding operations, future intentions, or developments of any unit in the naval service. Remember, you are not an official naval service spokesperson.
- Most media people are sincere, hardworking, and just trying to get a human interest story. However, there are some who want you to say anything for "a story" which they may develop further and you end up being misquoted or misrepresented.
- If you find yourself being inundated with constant phone calls from the media, then call the PAO.

# SUPPORT AND RESOURCE SERVICES

## FLEET AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

The Navy Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) is designed to offer a variety of personal support services to Navy families and single service members who have “everyday” needs as well as an occasional “crisis”.

FFSC staff members and volunteers, both military and civilian, work to coordinate people-oriented support and assistance programs in every area of Navy family life. Included in its wide range of services are:

- Information and referral services
- Certified counselors providing personal, marriage, family, parenting, educational and financial counseling
- Programs and presentations on marital enrichment, financial management, stress reduction, parenting skills and more
- Pre-deployment briefings and deployment support
- Relocation assistance and transition assistance
- Spouse employment assistance
- Ombudsman training
- Emergency assistance
- Command Sponsor Program assistance
- Retired affairs assistance

Your FFSC's phone number should be in the base telephone book or available through the base operator.

## MARINE CORPS COMMUNITY SERVICES – PERSONAL SERVICES BRANCH

Personal Services Branch is responsible for providing Marine Corps plans, policy, and resources to improve and sustain the capabilities of commanders to provide opportunities to increase education; successful relocations during their Marine Corps career; support the employment and career development of Marine spouses; facilitate successful transition to civilian life; prevent problems which detract from unit performance and readiness and to cope successfully with Marine Corps life. The appropriate level of intervention, treatment, and counseling services help Marines and Marine families to recover from personal and family problems and to provide victim advocacy and support services. Sections that support this mission include Lifelong Learning, Prevention and Intervention and Mobility.

## COAST GUARD - WORK-LIFE

The Coast Guard created Work-Life to provide a network of individuals and organizations to support Coast Guard members and their families. Work-Life issues are recognized as critical to individual and organizational success. This network of services enhances customer service and service delivery. Work-Life combines the formal structure of twenty-one Work-Life Staffs with an entire network of providers. Providers include volunteers, members with collateral duties, specialized billets and contracted services. The Beneficiary Guide introduces the program and the benefits available through the program.

The Work-Life Staffs offer resources to commands, members and family members. The Work-Life Staffs include these providers:



- **Family Advocacy Specialist:** Professionally trained to deal with family violence, crisis intervention and arrangements for victims, abuser and other family members.
- **Family Resource Specialist:** Responsible for the accessing and marketing of resources for the Special Needs, Child Care, Adoption Reimbursement, Elder Care and Scholarship programs.
- **Transition Relocation Manager:** Assists active duty, recalled reserve, recently separated and retired personnel, and their families during the relocation cycle.
- **Employee Assistance Coordinator:** Assists individuals and families to resolve situations in an effective manner. The EAC will assist individuals with personal financial management and civilian career counseling.
- **Health Promotion Specialist:** Available to assist individuals and commands in providing information concerning health care issues, education; and lectures and training in the area of health and fitness.

## AMERICAN RED CROSS

Red Cross services to members of the Armed Forces and their families are provided by station managers and their assistants stationed at U.S. military installations and military hospitals worldwide and in over 3,000 local chapters throughout the United States. Station managers and chapter staff cooperate to provide service to the whole family especially when members may be separated.

The Red Cross and Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society have agreed on procedures under which assistance is given to service personnel and their family members. Although the programs of the two groups are similar, there are situations in which both can assist, and others when one can help and the other cannot. Appropriate referrals between the Red Cross and Navy-Marine Corps Relief are made when necessary to give complete consideration of needs.

Red Cross services include:

- Emergency leave verification
- Worldwide emergency communication service between a service member and his/her family
- Consultation, guidance and referrals with personal or family problems
- Reports on situations warranting compassionate reassignment, deferment or hardship discharge
- Financial assistance in emergencies
- Service to patients in military hospitals
- Courses in CPR, First Aid, swimming and lifesaving, parenting, baby-sitting and more
- Blood: The Red Cross collects, processes, and distributes half the nation's blood supply and may be able to locate a matching rare blood type donor through its rare blood registry

## CHAPLAIN SUPPORT

The chaplain serves all service members and their families, not just certain individuals or groups. The quality of family life is of great concern to the naval service, and chaplains are active in almost all family support programs. Pastoral counseling is provided to all who seek such assistance, whether or not the person requesting support

is affiliated with a religious group. Chaplains are qualified to assist Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard spouses in finding solutions to personal, family, marital and spiritual dilemmas and in discovering the spiritual resources that will change their lives and sustain them in all circumstances.

A spouse may contact the service member's unit chaplain for assistance, or they may turn to chaplains working in a base chapel or Fleet and Family Support Center. Chaplains are available, they care and they are capable. They will assist if at all possible, but if not, they know where the best assistance can be obtained.

## **NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY**

The vagaries of the naval service often find sailors, Marines and their families without the financial resources to handle life's emergencies. The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is the naval service's own private, non-profit, charitable, support organization, established in 1904 to provide emergency financial assistance and counseling service in times of temporary need to active duty and retired navy and Marine Corps service members, their family members and survivors. An annual fund drive conducted by the active duty force structure generates revenue to finance the Society's wide-ranging relief activities.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

#### **• Disbursement of Interest-Free Loans and Grants**

This is the principal activity of the Society. Loans and grants are available for emergency transportation, shelter, food and utilities; medical and dental expenses not covered by government programs; funeral expenses for family members and retirees; essential motor vehicle repairs; and scholarships and interest-free education loans.

#### **• Volunteers Are the Lifeblood**

The Society also provides visiting nurse services, thrift shops, infant layettes, food lockers, budget counseling services and volunteer training classes. The Society is staffed, worldwide, by about 3,000 volunteers and a small, professional, paid staff who provide continuity, training and leadership. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Society, comprising approximately 92% of the work force. The CO/XO's spouse can make a vital contribution to the command by encouraging volunteerism.

#### **• Career Opportunities Abound**

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society provides professional-quality, on-the-job training and skills enhancement. If a volunteer decides to enter the commercial job market, letters of reference to prospective employers are provided. Opportunities abound for office receptionists, computer operators, client interviewers, loan collection facilitators, layette handcrafters, Thrift Shop interviewers, Thrift Shop merchandisers, volunteer visiting nurses, budget counseling speakers, public relations and/or marketing experts.

#### **• Training and Child Care Covered**

The Society provides formal orientation and training courses annually at most larger stations and bases. They are open to all with no obligation to volunteer upon completion. In fact, attendees will be reimbursed for commuting and for childcare expenses incurred.

Because knowledgeable family members are a constructive part of the Navy-Marine Corps team, all new military spouses are encouraged to attend. The course provides factual, current information about the intricacies of the military pay and benefit package, teaches family financial management techniques, and trains prospective volunteer interviewers in social service skills pertaining to Navy-Marine Corps Relief casework policies and procedures. The Society is blessed with a cadre of enthusiastic, hardworking and professional volunteers representing the active duty, family member and retired segments of the military family. You owe it to yourself to check out the opportunities available to you at the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. Their number will be located in your base or station directory, or you can contact the Society at their national office at:

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society  
4015 Wilson Boulevard, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Arlington, Virginia 22203  
(703) 696-4904

## COAST GUARD MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

The Mutual Assistance Program helps Coast Guard members help each other. This is an independent, nonprofit organization that is funded through tax-deductible contributions. The unit's Mutual Assistance representative is available to help with the following programs:

- **Emergency Loans** - Loans are provided for the following circumstances or needs: sudden financial or personal loss, stranded while traveling during transfer or return from leave, transportation at a time of illness, travel assistance for family members at a time of illness, and when pay is lost, stolen or delayed.
- **Housing Assistance** – If a need exists and if no other home is owned, loans of up to \$5,000 are available to help pay closing costs. Also based upon need, loans are available to renters to help pay security deposits.
- **General Assistance** – This program includes counseling and loans for funeral expenses, extraordinary medical or dental expenses, household goods, debt consolidation and vocational/technical training.
- **Adoption Assistance** – This program provides up-front loans to active duty personnel in advance of reimbursement by Coast Guard.

They can be reached by phone at: 1-800-881-2462 or on-line at [www.cgmahq.org](http://www.cgmahq.org)

## NAVAL SERVICES FAMILYLINE

Naval Services FamilyLine (FamilyLine) is an all-volunteer, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for every sea service family. Established in 1965, and formerly known as the Navy Wifeline Association, the new name was adopted in September 1999 to reflect the changing face of today's sea services and to emphasize our commitment to the entire sea service community.

FamilyLine volunteers provide assistance, information, and/or referral in all matters pertaining to the military or its lifestyle. FamilyLine developed the Navy-wide Ombudsman Support Network and the Ombudsman Journal. Its Chairman serves as the Chief of Naval Operations' Ombudsman-at-Large. These volunteers research, compile, write and edit publications and coordinate educational seminars. FamilyLine

has Field Representatives at bases around the world to serve as local points of contact.

The policies and programs of FamilyLine are guided by a Board of Advisors which includes spouses of both senior officers and enlisted personnel, active duty personnel and representatives of other service-oriented organizations.

FamilyLine is financed solely by contributions.

FamilyLine writes, publishes and provides free of charge a variety of informational literature on topics from social customs and traditions to planning and managing financial and personal affairs. For a complete listing of all of FamilyLine's publications, please refer to our list of Publications & References in this booklet. To request our FREE PRINTED MATERIALS, or for more information, please call or write:

Naval Services FamilyLine  
1254 9<sup>th</sup> Street SE, Suite 104  
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5067  
Phone: 202-433-2333  
Toll Free: 1-877-673-7773  
DSN: 288-2333  
Fax: 202-433-4622  
E-mail: nsfamline@aol.com  
www.lifelines.navy.mil/Familyline

Office hours: Monday – Friday  
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. EST

(Please leave a message on the answering machine if calling after hours)

## SUPPORT SERVICES

### COMMAND SPOUSE LEADERSHIP COURSE

Sponsored by Familyline and developed by CO spouses, the mission of the Command Spouse Leadership Course (CSLC) is to promote a team building approach to command by recognizing, inspiring and educating the Commanding Officers' spouses so they realize the positive impact they can have on the morale and success of the command. A main objective of this course (which mirrors that of the CO Leadership course) is the joint development of a "Command Tour Charter". Essentially, this is an agreement between husband and wife about the command tour and addresses goals, expectations, issues and concerns. By providing transportation and per diem for the spouse to attend this five-day course in Newport, R.I. the Navy demonstrates how vital it believes the CO's Spouse is to the success of the command tour as well as command families. For more information, contact Familyline.

### CO/XO SPOUSE SEMINARS

CO/XO spouse seminars are local/regional seminars that are usually held annually. If you have the opportunity to attend one, by all means do so. It is a wonderful chance to see old friends and meet new friends, to learn about your community, to hear speakers on personal enrichment, protocol, working with the Ombudsman, and other topics and to share ideas with your peers. If your area does not have a seminar, or has never had one, gather together some other spouses and contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center. They will provide planning support in all areas. Also, FamilyLine has information and guidelines on how to put on such a seminar.

## COMMANDER'S COURSE – MARINE CORPS

After the Marine Corps began to screen for command in 1991, a course was established for slated commanders. In keeping with the emphasis of the importance of leadership team training, a curriculum focused on the spouses of slated commanders was made a component of the Commanders' Program, which is presented at the Marine Corps University. Once a Marine is slated for command, the spouse is automatically invited to attend the spousal portion of the course.

The Spouses' Workshop relies on a format of large group presentations and small group interactions to ensure all participants receive and thoroughly discuss the information provided. Skilled speakers address topics such as: an overview of Marine Corps organization; the rights, the role, and the responsibilities of a commander's spouse; leadership and team building; and time and stress management. Additionally, a package on communication includes not only material on interpersonal communication but also information of public speaking and interacting with the media. In another presentation, the wives of senior Sergeants Major, share their insights on developing sound teamwork with SNCO and enlisted wives. Information is also given on entertaining—effective ways to entertain that contribute to unit cohesion, personal entertaining styles, etc.—and protocol and etiquette.

At the Workshop, commanders and their spouses share some of the sessions. Discussions spotlight the fundamentals of establishing a Key Volunteer Network, Trauma and Crisis, and various challenging situations that frequently crop up for command couples.

This practical information for new commanders' spouses guarantees a positive affect on unit readiness as both members of the command couple arrive at the command better equipped and more confident about their roles.

## NATIONAL SPOUSES' CLUBS

### • Navy Wives Clubs of America (NWCA)

NWCA is a national organization composed of an elected Board of National Officers, five regional presidents and over 70 local clubs. Its purpose is to provide welfare and educational projects for Navy families, promote and encourage friendships among spouses, and welcome new services spouses aboard. Nationally, the group is noted for its Scholarship Foundation.

Active membership is open to all spouses of enlisted members of the sea services (Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard) who are either active duty, reserve, retired or the widow/widower of a service member. Associate membership can be granted to those who are not eligible for active status. For more information, write to:

Navy Wives Club of America  
P.O. Box 2606  
Jacksonville, FL 32203-2606

### • National Council of Coast Guard Spouses' Clubs

The National Council of Coast Guard Spouses' Clubs is a national organization composed of an elected council of officers from spouses of enlisted and officer Coast Guard members and has over 40 local clubs. The purpose of the Nation Council is to establish

and coordinate the general policy of Coast Guard Spouses' Clubs, issue Certificates of Affiliation, advise (upon request) the administration of existing clubs and to aid in the establishment of new clubs. The National Council publishes the *Greensheet (also available on-line)*, *Yearbook*, and other educational information in the areas of family enrichment, stress and violence. It also serves as liaison between the Coast Guard Family Programs Office and Coast Guard Wives' Clubs. Contact them on the web at: [www.cgspouses.net](http://www.cgspouses.net) or by writing to:

National Council of Coast Guard Spouses' Clubs  
c/o Commandant, USCG/Family Support Program Staff (G-PD-3)  
2100 Second Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20593-0001

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Department of the Navy Legal Assistance Program helps active duty and retired service members and their family members resolve personal legal problems. Legal Assistance Attorneys are Navy and Marine Corps judge advocates who are members of the civilian bar in at least one jurisdiction. Legal assistance offices are located at naval legal service offices, detachments and at Marine Corps law centers all over the world. Staff Judge Advocates also provide limited legal assistance at installations without full service.

Although assistance was officially authorized in 1984, the program is not directly funded; accordingly, services are provided as available. At certain times and locations, services may not be available at all, and they will vary at each base or installation depending on the number and expertise of the legal assistance office to determine what services are offered and whether the office takes appointments, walk-ins or both.

Generally, your spouse's command will handle legal issues related to the command. If they cannot, or are deployed, then it is good to know where to turn. What are some situations where you may need to ask their advice?

- If you are a club advisor, there may be times you need a legal question answered.
- Can the Support Group hold a raffle?
- If your spouse is a CO, can you or your children be employed in his/her command (on shore, for example) or in a related command?

For detailed answers to these questions, and any others you may have, contact your local Legal Services Office. Do not take chances. It is better to be safe than sorry.

## NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY ASSOCIATION

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is a volunteer, non-profit organization open to active duty, reserve and retired military personnel of the seven uniformed services and their families.

Activities are directed primarily toward educating military families about their rights and benefits and informing policy-makers about the unique aspects of military life. Current issues include health care, spousal employment, housing, education, retirement and survivor benefits, former spouses, and compensation for PCS moves. For more information, you can contact NMFA at:

National Military Family Association, Inc.  
 2500 North Van Dorn, Suite 102  
 Alexandria, VA 22302  
 (703) 931-6632;  
 Fax: (703) 931-4600  
 Web site: [www.nmfa.org](http://www.nmfa.org).

## **CHILD CARE**

In view of the increasing number of working spouses, Navy Child Development Centers (CDCs) have become important to the naval service spouse. Knowing that their children are cared for in safe and well-run centers, military personnel have the peace of mind they need to perform their jobs more effectively.

Attempting to meet the needs of military families seeking child care at all our bases is a challenge, but there is an ongoing process of encouraging each center to provide the best child development programs available. Care may be provided on a regularly scheduled and part-time basis, and sometimes on a drop-in basis. It is important that each parent learn how to evaluate a CDC and the programs they offer by regularly visiting the center.

Family Home Care (FHC) has been authorized at many commands. FHC is care for children in government quarters. FHC is a viable alternative to center-based care and an excellent way to provide care for mildly ill, newborns and special needs children. The FHC program operates as an adjunct of the CDC at your installation. CO/XO spouses, along with the Ombudsman/Key Volunteer, can help the working spouses in their command by informing them about what is available in their area.

## **ARMED FORCES HOSTESS ASSOCIATION**

The Armed Forces Hostess Association (AFHA) is a volunteer group of military spouses who provide information about military bases all over the world to families transferring to new duty stations. From AFHA's extensive files of unclassified information, volunteers will assemble a packet of information on the transferee's new duty station.

When requesting information on a new duty station, please include your name, rank of the service member, branch of service, phone number, address, new duty station, departure and arrival dates, and family facts, including children's ages, pets and any special needs that should be addressed. AFHA can be reached at:

Armed Forces Hostess Association  
 Pentagon, Room 1A-736  
 6604 Army, Pentagon  
 Washington, D.C. 20310-6604  
 (703) 697-3180/6857  
 DSN: 227-6857  
 Hours – 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. EST.

## **USO (UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATION)**

The mission of the USO is to provide an organization through which people of the United States may serve the religious, spiritual, social, welfare and educational needs of

the Armed Forces and their families outside of military installations when off-duty or on leave. The USO's more than 170 off-station facilities are located in the continental United States (CONUS) and in many overseas U.S. military areas. Your local USO may offer discount or free tickets to attractions, tours and other entertainment.

## **COMPASS**

COMPASS is a spouse-to-spouse mentoring program by Naval Services FamilyLine. Using a standardized curriculum, and taught by trained volunteer spouse mentors, COMPASS introduces participants to many aspects of the Navy lifestyle: Navy mission, history, customs and traditions, rights and benefits, pay, deployments, moving, healthy communications, and investing in self and community. Offered as a twelve-hour course, delivered in three segments, the course is free of charge and baby-sitting is provided. For more information, e-mail COMPASS Project Director at [nsfamline@aol.com](mailto:nsfamline@aol.com).

## **ADDITIONAL SERVICES**

Other military and civilian agencies in the local area provide many additional support services about which the CO/XO's spouse is encouraged to know. These include the Navy League of the United States, Better Business Bureau, Neighborhood Watch groups and Crisis Intervention Programs. You may obtain a complete listing of these support organizations and a description of their roles from the Fleet and Family Support Center in your area.



# PUBLICATIONS & REFERENCES

## NAVAL SERVICES FAMILYLINE PUBLICATIONS

### *Social Customs and Traditions of the Navy – Guideline Series*

A concise booklet to acquaint spouses with some of the social customs, protocol, traditions and organizations that are a part of the sea services community. Written and published by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers.

### *Guidelines for the Spouses of Commanding Officers and Executive Officers – Guideline Series*

An invaluable booklet for prospective and current CO/XO spouses; covering everything from Ombudsmen and deployments to support resources and emergency guidelines. Written and published by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers.

### *Guidelines for the Spouses of Command Master Chiefs and Chiefs of the Boat – Guideline Series*

An excellent resource for prospective and current CSEL spouses, filled with information and helpful hints. Written and published by CMC spouses for CMC spouses.

### *Guidelines for Spouses of Chief Petty Officers - Guidelines Series*

Written by a Chief spouse for Chief spouses, this exciting publication guides spouses through a most exciting transition.

### *Guidelines for Launching Clubs and Command Family Associations – Guideline Series*

A booklet containing helpful suggestions on how to start a new club or group. Also, established groups can benefit from the excellent ideas for activities and projects. Written and published by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers.

### *Navy Wives' Clubs of America*

An informational brochure about the national organization for enlisted spouses.

### *Overseasmanship*

An informative guide for helping spouses and families prepare for an overseas tour. This book is also helpful to the unmarried service member. Written by Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers and published in two parts for viewing on-line by the Bureau of Naval Personnel under the “pubs” heading at the following web site:

[www.persnet.navy.mil/pers66/ombudsman1/start.htm](http://www.persnet.navy.mil/pers66/ombudsman1/start.htm).

### *Sea Legs*

A handbook for Navy spouses. Both the seasoned Navy spouse as well as the newcomer will find useful information on matters such as family support services, rights, privileges or benefits, moving, health and medical care, personal finances, social customs and courtesies and deployments. History, mission and structure of the Navy, a naval terms glossary and a list of resource addresses are also included. Revisions are coordinated with Naval Services FamilyLine volunteers and published by the Bureau of Naval Personnel. (Revised 1997)

## NAVAL SERVICES FAMILYLINE PORTFOLIO

This portfolio is a wonderful resource for new spouses. It is also excellent for distribution at Navy spouse seminars. It is FREE and includes *Social Customs and Traditions of the Navy*, *Sea Legs*, “Welcome Aboard” brochure, and various informational brochures about subjects concerning service family benefits. They are available in individual or bulk orders from Naval Services FamilyLine.

# NAVAL ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

**ADAPT** – Active Duty Assistance Program Team  
**AOC** – Aviation Officer Candidate  
**APO** – Army and Air Force Post Office  
**ASAP** – As soon as possible  
**AT** – Annual Training  
**AWOL** – Absent without leave  
**BAH** – Basic Allowance for Housing  
**BAQ** – Basic Allowance for Quarters  
**BAS** – Basic Allowance for Subsistence  
**BEQ** – Bachelor Enlisted Quarters  
**BUMED** – Bureau of Medicine and Surgery  
**BUPERS** – Bureau of Naval Personnel  
**CACP** – Casualty Assistance and Calls Program  
**CACO** – Casualty Assistance Calls Officer  
**CEA** – Chief Enlisted Advisor  
**CHINFO** – Chief of Information  
**CMC** – Command Master Chief  
**CNO** – Chief of Naval Operations  
**CNP** – Chief of Naval Personnel  
**CO** – Commanding Officer  
**COB** – Chief of the Boat  
**COLA** – Cost of Living Allowance  
**CONUS** – Continental United States  
**CPO** – Chief Petty Officer  
**DEERS** – Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System  
**DOD** – Department of Defense  
**DODDS** – Department of Defense Dependent Schools  
**EAOS** – End of Active Obligated Service  
**ESGR** – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve  
**ETA** – Estimated time of arrival  
**ETD** – Estimated time of departure  
**EXEC** – Executive Officer  
**FFSC** – Fleet and Family Support Center  
**FITREP** – Fitness Report  
**FMF** – Fleet Marine Force  
**FPO** – Fleet Post Office  
**FRO** – Family Readiness Officer  
**FRP** – Fleet Response Plan  
**FTTD** – Full-Time Training Duty  
**HQMC** – Headquarters, Marine Corps  
**IA** – Individual Augmentee  
**IDT** – Initial Active Duty Training  
**IRR** – Individual Ready Reserve  
**JAG** – Judge Advocate General (lawyer)  
**JCS** – Joint Chiefs of Staff  
**JNROTC** – Junior Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps  
**LDO** – Limited Duty Officer  
**MCAS** – Marine Corps Air Station  
**MCPON** – Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy  
**MEB** – Marine Expeditionary Brigade  
**MEF** – Marine Expeditionary Force

# ACRONYMS

**MEU** – Marine Expeditionary Unit  
**MOS** – Military Occupational Specialty  
**MWR** – Morale, Welfare and Recreation  
**NAS** – Naval Air Station  
**NAVFAC** – Naval Facility  
**NAVSTA** – Naval Station  
**NCO** – Noncommissioned Officer  
**NLSO** – Naval Legal Service Office  
**NMC** – Naval Medical Command  
**NROTC** – Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps  
**OCONUS** – Outside CONUS  
**OCS** – Officer Candidate School  
**OMBUDSMAN** – Official liaison between a command and its families  
**OOD** – Officer of the Deck  
**OPNAV** – Office of the Chief of Naval Operations  
**OSD** – Office of the Secretary of Defense  
**OTIS** – Overseas Transfer Information Service  
**PAO** – Public Affairs Officer  
**PCO** – Prospective Commanding Officer  
**PCS** – Permanent Change of Station  
**POC** – Point of Contact  
**POD** – Plan of the Day  
**POE** – Port of Embarkation  
**POW** – Plan of the Week  
**PSD** – Personnel Support Detachment  
**PXO** – Prospective Executive Officer  
**RAC** – Relocation Assistance Center  
**RC** – Reserve Components  
**RPA** – Reserve Program Administrators  
**SADT** – Special Active Duty for Training  
**SATO** – Scheduled Airlines Ticket Office  
**SBP** – Survivors Benefit Plan  
**SEA** – Senior Enlisted Advisor  
**SECDEF** – Secretary of Defense  
**SECNAV** – Secretary of the Navy  
**SGLI** – Servicemen's Group Life Insurance  
**SITREP** – Situation Report  
**SMCR** – Selected Marine Corps Reserve  
**SOPA** – Senior Officer Present Afloat  
**STARC** – State Area Command  
**TAD** – Temporary Additional Duty  
**TBD** – To be determined  
**TLA** – Temporary Lodging Allowance  
**TO** – Transportation Office  
**TSP** – Thrift Savings Plan  
**UA** – Unauthorized absence  
**UCMJ** – Uniformed Code of Military Justice  
**VA** – Veterans' Administration  
**WO** – Warrant Officer  
**XO** – Executive Officer



# NOTES

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## *Acknowledgment*

Guidelines for the Spouses of Commanding Officers and Executive Officers have been written and edited by Naval Services FamilyLine in response to requests from Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard spouses around the world.

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